WAVES, WETLANDS, AND WATERSHEDS

California Coastal Commission
Science Activity Guide

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Waves, Wetlands, and Watersheds is a classroom based hands-on activity guide that integrates California Coastal Commission areas of critical concern (wetlands, coastal processes, marine debris and pollution, and endangered species) with California Science Content Standards for grades three through eight. Also included are community action activities for all ages and grades.

The California Coastal Commission was established by voter initiative in 1972 and made permanent by the Legislature in 1976 with the passage of the California Coastal Act. Its mission is to protect and enhance the resources of the California coast and ocean for current and future generations. In addition to planning and regulatory functions, the Commission carries out a public education program that includes the annual California Coastal Cleanup Day; the Adopt-A-Beach Program; the Boating Clean and Green Campaign; the Waves, Wetlands, and Watersheds school program; and the Whale Tail License Plate Program. The Commission’s Whale Tail License Plate gives drivers a way to support California’s coast and ocean. Proceeds fund the Commission’s public education programs, as well as the Whale Tail Grants Program, which supports marine education at the local level.

For more information, or to order copies of this activity guide, contact the California Coastal Commission: 45 Fremont Street, Suite 2000, San Francisco, CA, 94105, (415)904-5200, coast4u@coastal.ca.gov, or www.coastforyou.org

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The citizens of California established the California Coastal Commission through a voter initiative in 1972. They recognized that the coast is a great treasure and should be preserved for us all. This belief remains a core value in our state and the Commission continues to work to maintain accessible, healthy beaches, and clean, productive ocean waters.

Increasing the public’s knowledge and understanding of coastal and marine resources is an important aspect of this work. The more that people know about the coast and ocean, the better able they are to care for these ecosystems. When we introduce our young people to the ocean and its beaches, we shape tomorrow’s coastal stewards.

The ocean provides us with food, helps create our weather and climate, shapes our land, and serves to connect us to distant nations and peoples. It is a place of refuge, contemplation, and inspiration. For all these reasons and more, it is important for California’s children to understand and respect this powerful force. This science activity guide furthers that goal.

As we learn the value of the ocean, it becomes clear that its health is dependent upon the health of the land that borders it. California’s watersheds, rivers, and wetlands all affect the coastal environment with its many plant and animal species, and in turn affect the ocean itself. Even inland communities have a responsibility for and a stake in the health of the ocean. It is my hope that all citizens of our state will learn to understand and appreciate this fascinating resource and join in efforts to protect, preserve, and restore California’s coast and ocean for many generations to come.

Mike Reilly
Chair, California Coastal Commission, 2003